

The Briefing



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What is the Mission of the Church?

[Marty Sweeney \(http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/authors/marty-sweeney/\)](http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/authors/marty-sweeney/) | 15 November, 2011

There have been many predictions about the next evangelical crisis. Perhaps correctly, many have predicted that it will again be on the nature and authority of the Bible. Is the telltale sign of this the fact that the post conservative post-modernists have tried to change the argument from being about the reliability/accuracy of the Bible to the interpretation of the Bible, all in the name of wanting to be an insider of this “evangelical” club?

After reading [a critique \(http://thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/review/what-is-the-mission-of-the-church-making-sense-of-social-justice-shalom\)](http://thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/review/what-is-the-mission-of-the-church-making-sense-of-social-justice-shalom) of Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert's [What is the Mission of the Church? \(http://www.wtsbooks.com/product-exec/product_id/7923/nm/What-Is-the-Mission-of-the-Church%3F%3A-Making-Sense-of-Social-Justice%2C-Shalom%2C-and-the-Great-Commission+%28Paperback%29\)](http://www.wtsbooks.com/product-exec/product_id/7923/nm/What-Is-the-Mission-of-the-Church%3F%3A-Making-Sense-of-Social-Justice%2C-Shalom%2C-and-the-Great-Commission+%28Paperback%29). I wonder if their question is the next great debate of the evangelicals. Certainly, there is great overlap and relationship between these two issues. And maybe the somewhat defunct Emergent Church (or, is it Emerging?) has brought together these two issues in what it has tried to say and do.

Whatever one thinks of the debate, you can't deny – at least in the US – that the issue of the church is on the forefront. I only heard questions about the church and its mission in the halls of my seminary as a student. Now, I am hearing them from the most average of the average Joes at my church.

Why does the church exist?

What should a church look like?

What should a church do?

Not less than a few Moore College graduates have told me of Broughton Knox's take on the issue. Second-hand sources tell me that he said “**The church doesn't have a mission. The church is the mission.**” I'd like to think that it is a correct reporting of his statement because I like it.

Either way, does it reframe the discussion? Or, is it another way of saying the same thing that DeYoung and Gilbert are saying? (You can get a good feel from the review posted above, but I suppose I can safely say that the church's mission, according to the authors, is to make disciples.)

Maybe a few MTC graduates who know about the context of this purported statement can fill me in. Or, better yet, maybe anyone can let me know if he is on to something with this statement.

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